



ANDOVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

36R Bartlet Street
Andover, MA 01810
(978) 247-7010

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Shannon I. Scully- Chairperson
Susan K. McCready- Vice Chairperson
Lauren M. Conoscenti, Ph.D.
Paul Murphy
Tracey Spruce, Esq.

Sheldon H. Berman, Ed.D
Superintendent of Schools

For Immediate Release

August 28, 2020

Contact:

Nicole L. Kieser
Director of Communications
Andover Public Schools
nicole.kieser@andoverma.us

We are aware educators across Massachusetts have opposed the return to school plans developed under state mandates and set forth by their districts and school committees, specifically any plan that calls for a return to in-person work.

Over the summer, the Andover School Committee, all district administrators and the Return to School Task Force spent thousands of hours and invested hundreds of thousands of dollars planning for the 2020-21 school year with health and safety of our students and staff as a top priority. Twenty-six teachers, instructional assistants, social workers, and special education staff served on the Return to School Task Force to provide their recommendations and perspective in the district's final plan that was submitted to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

The district's plan is compliant with DESE's requirements. In fact, we are confident that Andover exceeds these requirements, including in the areas of health and safety. Andover is well positioned to enable in-person learning with the district's hybrid learning plan to start the new year.

Negotiations with the AEA are on-going, with five sessions conducted thus far and a sixth planned for Tuesday. The School Committee has, and will continue to meet, its bargaining obligations. During negotiations, the AEA leadership has expressed a preference for teaching from home, but that decision does not fall to the Union.

On August 10th, the School Committee approved submission of the Andover 2020-21 school year reopening plan required by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), and voted to begin the school year offering a Hybrid model for all students along with a Remote Academy for students who require or choose to learn remotely.

Educators have been directed to begin their school year in-person on Monday, August 31. We continue to expect that they will. If the Union instead chooses to engage in an illegal work stoppage, we are prepared to address that through the proper channels.

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About APS: The mission of the Andover Public Schools, in partnership with the entire Andover community, is to educate by engaging and inspiring students to develop as self-reliant, responsible citizens who are thinkers, problem solvers, and contributors prepared to participate in an evolving global society.